

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TUNIS 05491 111216Z

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ACTION TRSE-00

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 DEAE-00 SNM-02 AID-05

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R 111130Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 162

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

UNCLAS TUNIS 5491

DEPT PASS CUSTOMS FOR ACREE

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SNAR, TS

SUBJ: US CUSTOMS INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL TRAINING PROGRAMS

REF: STATE 153830

1. EMBASSY HAS DELIVERED ACREE INVITATION FOR VIP VISIT TO TUNISIAN CUSTOMS CHIEF SALAH BEN M'BARKA AS REQUESTED. HE RECEIVED INVITATION VERY CORDIALLY AND APPEARS INTERESTED IN VISIT. HOWEVER, HE MUST CONSULT WITH HIS MINISTER BEFORE ACCEPTING FORMALLY AND FIXING DATE. EMBASSY WILL ADVISE WHEN MORE INFORMATION AVAILABLE.

2. CUSTOMS SHOULD BE AWARE THAT BEN M'BARKA HIMSELF IS NOT REPEAT NOT LIKELY TO BE ABLE STAY IN U.S. FOR PROPOSED PERIOD OF TWO TO FOUR WEEKS. EMBASSY HAS SUGGESTED THAT AFTER HIS OWN VISIT OF PERHAPS WEEK TO TEN DAYS, BEN M'BARKA PERMIT HIS ACCOMPANYING HIGH-LEVEL ASSISTANT REMAIN FOR FURTHER OBSERVATION AND DISCUSSIONS. THIS APPEARS TO EMBASSY TO BE WORKABLE ARRANGEMENTS SINCE BEN M'BARKA IS POLITICAL APPOINTEE WITH LIMITED DIRECT EXPERIENCE IN CUSTOMS MATTERS. HIS ASSISTANT WILL PROBABLY BE IN BETTER POSITION TO DISCUSS DETAILS OF SERVICE-TO-SERVICE
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PAGE 02 TUNIS 05491 111216Z

PROGEAMS.

3. IN RESPONSE TO EMBOFF'S MENTION OF PROPOSED IN-COUNTRY TRAINING PROGRAM DATES OF NOVEMBER 24 THROUGH DECEMBER 5 (PARA 2 REFTTEL), BEN M'BARKA STATED IT TOO SOON TO FIX DATES SINCE TUNISIAN CUSTOMS SERVICE CURRENTLY UNDERGOING MAJOR REORGANIZATION AND SHIFTS OF PERSONNEL. HE FEELS THAT LIKELY CANDIDATES FOR PROPOSED COURSE MUST BE GIVEN TIME TO SETTLE INTO THEIR NEW POSITIONS BEFORE PARTICIPATING IN TRAINING PROGRAMS. EMBOFF SUGGESTED THAT FORTHCOMING VIP VISIT WOULD PROVIDE GOOD OPPORTUNITY DISCUSS DETAILS OF TUNISIAN PARTICIPATION IN BOTH U.S. - BASED MID-MANAGEMENT AND IN-COUNTRY COURSES.
SEELYE

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